

## U.S. COPYRIGHT OFFICE LEADERSHIP



### **Maria A. Pallante**

#### **Register of Copyrights and Director**

As United States Register of Copyrights, Maria A. Pallante directs the legal, policy, and business activities of the United States Copyright Office. The Copyright Office administers important provisions of Title 17, including the nation's copyright registration and recordation systems and certain statutory licenses. The Register and her staff lead public discussions in the field of copyright law, act as principle advisors to the Congress on matters of domestic and international copyright policy, and support a variety of intellectual property efforts across the U.S. government, including appellate litigation, trade negotiations, and treaty implementations. Ms. Pallante assumed her duties on June 1, 2011, after serving five months as Acting Register.

Prior to her appointment in 2011, Ms. Pallante held two senior positions in the U.S. Copyright Office, serving first as Deputy General Counsel (2007–2008) and then as Associate Register & Director of Policy and International Affairs (2008–2010). From 1999–2007, she was Intellectual Property Counsel and Director of Licensing for the worldwide Guggenheim Museums, headquartered in New York. She also worked for two authors' organizations in New York, serving first as Assistant Director of the Authors Guild, Inc. and then as Executive Director of the National Writers Union, in each case working on copyright policy, transactions, litigation, and freedom of expression issues. She practiced briefly with the Washington, D.C., law firm and literary agency Lichtman, Trister, Singer and Ross, and completed a clerkship in administrative law for the appellate division of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Ms. Pallante is a 1990 graduate of the George Washington University Law School. She earned her bachelor's degree in history from Misericordia University in Pennsylvania, where she was also awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters.

#### **FOCUS OF TENURE**

Under Ms. Pallante's leadership, the U.S. Copyright Office commenced a two-year evaluative process to address current complexities in the copyright system and to prepare the Copyright Office for future challenges. She released the public paper Priorities and Special Projects of the United States Copyright Office in October 2011,

which identified seventeen priorities in policy and administrative practice and ten special projects for the Office. Using the Priorities document as a guide, the Copyright Office engaged with colleagues and customers across the public and private sectors to discuss a variety of issues relating to the quality and efficiency of Copyright Office services and possible future directions. Some of these discussions took the form of meetings or public roundtables outside the capital city, including Los Angeles, Silicon Valley, New York, and Nashville. The public feedback from this effort will help to define the Office's long-term strategic plan.

In March 2013, Ms. Pallante helped initiate a comprehensive congressional review of U.S. copyright law, through her Horace S. Manges Lecture The Next Great Copyright Act, presented at Columbia Law School, as well as subsequent testimony before the House Judiciary Committee. In November 2013, she delivered the Christopher Meyer Memorial Lecture at the George Washington University School of Law, entitled The Next Generation Copyright Office: What it Means and Why it Matters. Other speeches include Review and Reflection: Copyright Hearings and Related Discourse in the Nation's Capital (February 2014); ASCAP at 100 (February 2014); The Curious Case of Copyright Formalities (April 2013) and Orphan Works & Mass Digitization: Obstacles & Opportunities (April 2012).

In December 2014, Ms. Pallante released the first comprehensive revision of the *Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices* in more than two decades. She has delivered to Congress the following policy studies: Copyright and the Music Marketplace (February 2015), Resale Royalties: An Updated Analysis (December 2013), Copyright Small Claims (September 2013), Federal Copyright Protection for Pre-1972 Sound Recordings (December 2011), Legal Issues in Mass Digitization: A Preliminary Analysis and Discussion Document (October 2011) and Report on Marketplace Alternatives to Replace Statutory Licenses (August 2011). Several studies are pending, including the making available right, and orphan works and mass digitization.

Ms. Pallante has created several new programs to bring additional expertise to the Office. These include the Barbara A. Ringer Copyright Honors Fellowship, a distinguished public service clerkship for attorneys in the early stages of their careers, and the Abraham L. Kaminste in Scholar in Residence Program, an opportunity for leading academics to work at the Copyright Office on mutually beneficial projects. Her educational initiatives include the Copyright Matters Lecture Series, a community forum by which industry experts discuss the practical implications of copyright law in the 21st century, and the Copyright Academy, an internal program by which staff study a variety of complex legal provisions and judicial interpretations. She created a research program for law schools, in which professors design courses and projects around timely issues and students receive support and direction throughout the semester from Copyright Office experts.

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## ABOUT THE USCO

Congress created the Copyright Office in 1897 as a separate department of the Library of Congress. The Register of Copyrights serves by appointment of, and under the general direction of, the Librarian of Congress. Congress enacted the first federal Copyright Act in 1790 in accordance with Article 1, section 8 of the United States Constitution, "to promote the progress of science and the useful arts by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective discoveries."